



Venice Neighborhood Council

LAND USE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

PO Box 550, Venice, CA 90294 www.VeniceNC.org

Email: Chair-LUPC@VeniceNC.org



STAFF REPORT

Report Date: 9/16/2021
Staff: Michael Jensen
LUPC Date: 5/20/2021
VNC Date: 9/21/2021

OVERVIEW

Address: 522 Venice Blvd.

Applicant: 522 Venice, LLC

Representative: Brian Silveira, Silveira & Associates

Case No.: CPC-2020-5839-DB-CU-CDP-MEL-SPP-HCA

Supporting Documents: [Supporting Documents](#)

Project Description: DENSITY BONUS CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT, CDP WITH MELLO, AND MAJOR PROJECT PERMIT VENICE COASTAL SPP COMPLIANCE FOR A NEW 26 UNIT APARTMENT (7 VLI UNITS).¹

Requested Entitlement(s): (1) CUP for Density Bonus, (2) CDP with Mello Compliance, and (3) Major Project Permit Venice Coastal SPP Compliance for a new 26 unit apartment building (7 Very Low Income Units)

Staff Summary of Project: Demolition of residential triplex currently used as “podshare” co-living to be replaced by 26-unit apartment building with 7 very low income units.

The Project seeks a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) pursuant to LAMC 12.24(U)(26) to permit the following density bonuses: (1) Permit a 20% reduction in required westerly side yard to allow a 4’10” side yard setback in lieu of the required 6’ side yard setback pursuant to LAMC 12.09.1 B 2 (A); (2) Permit a 60% reduction in required front yard setback along Mildred Avenue frontage to allow a 9’ front yard setback in lieu of the required 15’ front yard setback pursuant to LAMC 12.09.1 B 1; and (3) Permit the project to provide 19 standard parking stalls and 12 compact parking stalls in lieu of the 1 standard parking space per dwelling unit minimum (26 standard stalls) required pursuant to LAMC 12.21 A 5 C.

Applicant has since reduced density bonus on side yard setback from 4’-10” to 10’3”-15’ range and reduced number of parking spaces from 31 to 28, which is reflected on the updated plans dated 9/16/2021.

Venice Sub-Area: Oakwood-Milwood-Southeast Venice

¹ Note that AdCom Agenda item does not accurately reflect this [case description on Department of Planning website](#).

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Zoning: RD 1.5

Existing SF: 16,096.46 SF lot

Proposed SF: 13,905 SF, FAR of 1.26:1

Proposed Parking: 26 tenant spaces, 2 guest spaces; parking is “bundled”; 46 bike stalls

Number of Units: 26 units total; 19 market-rate units, 7 affordable units (very low income)

COMPLIANCE WITH SPECIFIC PLAN

- Setbacks:** The Project’s proposed setbacks ask for a 60% reduction (from 15 feet to 9 feet) in front yard setback along Mildred 20%, to accommodate the city’s required dedication, and reduction to side yard setbacks (an “on-menu” incentive where the side yard abuts a large public right-of-way area). (LAMC § 12.22 A.25(f)(1).) The side yard setbacks originally requested were modest (approx. one foot), though have since been increased. The design of the apartment complex places the massing of the buildings on Venice Blvd., a major throughfare and on Mildred, across from a mostly commercial parcel (formerly Tesuque Market).
- Height:** The project has a maximum height of 30 feet, which is compliant with the Venice Specific Plan. The Project is not seeking any increases in height.
- Parking:** The Project proposes 28 spaces to be provided. Without density incentives under the Specific Plan, the parking requirement would otherwise be two spaces for each dwelling unit (52) plus one guest space for each four or fewer units (9), a total of 61 spaces. (Specific Plan, § 13.D.; see LAMC § 12.21 A.4). However, LAMC § 12.22 A.25(d) provides for reduced parking requirements as part of the density incentives sought (1 space per 0-1 bedroom market rate unit, and 0.5 spaces per affordable unit), resulting in 26 spaces required. Importantly, the Project provides three more spaces than are required by the LAMC.
- Affordable Units:** The current site contains three units, which are not expected to be designated as “affordable.” However, this Project proposes 7 affordable units that would satisfy conditions of the Mello Act, even if applicable.
- ZAA/Waiver:** The project does not seek a ZAA or waiver, but instead CUP for density bonuses, as outlined herein.
- Mass, Character, and Scale** The Project’s three-story height is within that permitted by the Specific Plan, and the resulting FAR of 1.26:1 (compared to 3:1 allowed by LAMC) is consistent with mixed use buildings on nearby Abbott Kinney. Notably, the Project does not seek bonuses for increases in height or FAR that would be permitted under the LAMC. The project will provide 3,986 SF of common space, including 2,700 SF of usable open space for residents.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Date(s): February 2021; April 26, 2021; September 2, 2021

Notification Radius: 250 ft.

Summary of Feedback:

Applicant's representative held two outreach meetings to present the projects to neighbors and has corresponded at length with neighbors over the past several months. At the first outreach meeting, neighbors raised concerns regarding the parking exit. As a result, Applicant relocated the exit to Venice Blvd from Washington Way. Several stakeholders from the Silver Triangle attended the second outreach meeting. Several Silver Triangle residents raised concerns about:

- Parking for 26 units being only 31 spaces
- Density of 26 units—too many
- Lack of visitor parking
- Location of Uber pick up/drop off
- “Greed of owner”
- Whether the low-income unit prices will be inclusive of parking

Additionally, as part of the redesigned plans, the intersection at Venice Blvd. and Washington Way is proposed to be altered to make crossing Washington Way safer. Some neighbors commented on the “tightness” of intersection, pedestrian crossing in front of driveway entrance/exit on Venice.

In response to community input, Applicant has offered changes to the parking:

- Parking will still be unbundled except that affordable units will include 1 free parking space upon request.
- The parking entrance was always at Venice Blvd. After the first outreach meeting we relocated the parking exit from Washington Way to Venice Blvd and created the new intersection design.

Following the Project's approval at LUPC on May 20, 2021, Applicant engaged further with stakeholders to accommodate their concerns. The following changes were made:

- Subterranean parking garage reconfigured to accommodate cedar roots. Cedar tree preserved - 3 parking spaces lost. Total parking reduced from 31 to 28 spaces.
- Building setback next to ballpark increased from 4' 10" to 10' 3"-15'; to create a buffer between elm tree/ballpark and our proposed building.
- Removed pedestrian entrance on Mildred.
- Parking changed from “unbundled” to standard assignment of 1 parking space per unit.
- All 7 affordable units will be master-leased by Podshare, who will convert some of their existing residents to long-term affordable tenants in the new building.

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- Plans include new trees in the between our property line and the current Venice Blvd sidewalk (R-permit).

Revised plans incorporating these changes are dated 9/16/21 and available [here](#). Despite approval of the Project as presented by LUPC on 5/20/21, Applicant continued to work with stakeholders over the past several months to accommodate their concerns.

LUPC HEARING SUMMARY

Public Comment: Many of the same individuals reiterated concerns from stakeholders during outreach, which are summarized above.

An architect/arborist Sarah Wauters proposed incorporating trees instead of parking spaces and/or units.

Board Comment: LUPC committee overwhelmingly likes the project because it achieves creation of affordable using and workforce housing, all while maintaining compliance with the Specific Plan and density bonuses under the LAMC. LUPC invited applicant and representative to continue dialogue with neighbors throughout entitlement phase to see if any accommodations could be made to address neighbors' concerns.

Recommended Motion: Motion to Approve as presented by Michael, seconded by Alix, unanimously approved (7-0-0)